

Losing **SCHIP** Would Be Unbearable.



DIVERSE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS JOIN TO CALL FOR RENEWAL OF STATE CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM (SCHIP)

*New Opinion Research Shows Overwhelming
Public Support for Strong, Ongoing SCHIP Program*

WASHINGTON, DC (July 25, 2007) — Demonstrating broad public support for ensuring that children in low-income families have access to health coverage, nearly nine in ten registered voters voice support for the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP).

President Bush has threatened to veto bipartisan Senate legislation that would increase SCHIP funding by \$35 billion over five years. Almost two-thirds of voters surveyed late last week said they think the President would be doing the wrong thing if he vetoed the legislation.

Building on such widespread support for the SCHIP program and its 10-year record of success, a diverse group of national leadership organizations has joined together to convey a simple but important message: We do not always agree, but we do agree on health care coverage for our nation's children. For this reason, we urge Congress to pass and the President to sign SCHIP reauthorization legislation quickly, and provide coverage for a vulnerable population we cannot afford to neglect—children.

“We stand united because we believe Congress and the President should do the right thing for our children and our nation—reauthorize a critically important program that is supported by the vast majority of voters,” said Sr. Carol Keehan, DC, president and chief executive officer of the Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA), which organized the press conference on Capitol Hill.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, more than eight million children are still uninsured in the U.S., many of them eligible for the SCHIP program but still not enrolled. Eight in ten voters surveyed said they believe that such a high number of uninsured children represents a crisis or very serious problem. More than six in ten voters said the current health care system is not meeting the needs of children.

The national public opinion survey was conducted on behalf of the Catholic Health Association of the United States by Public Opinion Strategies, Inc., of Alexandria, VA. The survey included responses from 800 registered voters contacted by telephone between July 19-22. The margin of error is plus or minus 3.46 percent.

Please see attached for quotes from all participating organizations and survey data.

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AFL-CIO

"Not all of us here today agree on how best to enact national health care reform. But we are united on the need to cover children by building on the proven success of the SCHIP program." John Sweeney, president, AFL-CIO



American Academy of Family Physicians

"SCHIP provides health care to millions of uninsured children who, as a result, will get the preventive care that will keep them healthy and out of the emergency rooms. The program is an essential part of our health care system, and we strongly urge Congress and the Administration to preserve this vital health care service." Larry S. Fields, M.D., Board Chair of the American Academy of Family Physicians



American Academy of Pediatrics

"Pediatricians have been working hard all year to secure the best congressional SCHIP reauthorization we can for our patients. Every child needs and deserves health insurance coverage." Jay E. Berkelhamer, M.D., President



American Association of Homes and Services for the Aging

"AAHSA is concerned for the health of Americans young and old. Comprehensive insurance for children is where that starts." Larry Minnix, President and CEO



American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology

"We strongly support the reauthorization of SCHIP and oppose its proposed veto. As asthma & other allergic diseases are growing among children every year, the College is concerned that, without SCHIP Reauthorization, many children may not be able to get the care they need to keep them healthy and in school." Daniel Ein, M.D., President of American College of Allergy, Asthma and Immunology



A Union of Professionals

American Federation of Teachers

"We still have children coming to school who are underfed, uncared for and whose illnesses are untreated. Without addressing those needs, it is much more difficult to address their educational needs. We cannot expect to improve children's lives and children's education if we -- as a society -- aren't prepared to tackle problems like poverty, healthcare and nutrition." Edward J. McElroy, president of the American Federation of Teachers



American Medical Association

"The American Medical Association is dedicated to ensuring that low-income children are able to get the health care they need through the State Children's Health Insurance Program. An increase in federal tobacco taxes can act as a key funding source for the millions of children SCHIP will protect – including the many who are currently eligible for the program, but not enrolled." Ron Davis, M.D., AMA President



American Nurses Association

"ANA has long held the belief that health care is a basic human right. ANA has a history of advocacy on behalf of America's underinsured and uninsured; ANA supports increased funding for S-CHIP and universal availability of coverage and care for all children in the U.S." Rebecca M. Patton, MSN, RN, CNOR, President



Better Health Care Together

"Better Health Care Together is proud to stand here today to urge Congress to reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Program as soon as possible. In June, our coalition, made up of leaders in business, labor and public policy groups, urged the reauthorization of the enormously successful State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) with the necessary changes to ensure all children who are SCHIP-eligible but otherwise uninsured get the care they need to live healthy, productive lives." Charles Kolb, President of the Committee for Economic Development, on behalf of the Better Health Care Together Coalition



Catholic Charities USA

"It is a tragedy that nine million children are living without health insurance in this country when we know that SCHIP works and is making a real difference in the lives of children from low-income families. We can – and must – do better. SCHIP should be reauthorized and strengthened so even more low-income children have the health care coverage they need to grow up healthy and strong." Candy Hill, senior vice president for social policy for Catholic Charities USA



Catholic Health Association of the United States

"We may not see eye to eye on many of the issues facing this nation, but we all agree that our children must be able to receive the health care they need to learn, to participate in school and to build their futures on a healthy foundation." Sr. Carol Keehan, DC, President and Chief Executive Officer



THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH

The Episcopal Church

"Whoever cares for the least cares for the divine image in our midst. The health and well-being of children, especially those living in the richest nation in the world, should never be reduced to political ideology, and I urge Congress and the Bush Administration to renew S-CHIP legislation promptly." The Most Reverend Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church

Families USA

"With the renewal of SCHIP, we can build on a successful bipartisan partnership to ensure that millions of American children will no longer be denied basic health care. It was only three years ago when the president pledged to the American people that he would lead the way in enrolling millions of additional eligible children in the SCHIP program. Unbelievably, the President is now threatening to veto this critical legislation. The time has come for the President to drop his veto threats and to honor his pledge to provide coverage to millions of uninsured children." Ron Pollack, Executive Director of Families USA



The Voice for Health Care Consumers

Federation of American Hospitals

"The SCHIP program is a proven winner for millions of children. Congress has an opportunity to sustain this success by bringing this program to even more kids. Now is the time for leadership on behalf of the kids. Congress should act now on SCHIP."



First Focus

"The facts are clear – time after time, polling has shown that an overwhelming majority of Americans support providing health coverage for ALL children. Unfortunately, the biggest threat to the health and well-being of our nation's children is the Administration's veto threats. Trying to derail the most successful children's program in over a decade is wrong for the future of our children and our country." Bruce Lesley, President of First Focus



MAKING CHILDREN & FAMILIES THE PRIORITY

Generations United

"Support quality health care for kids. Healthy children learn better and grow up stronger, which creates a robust society for people of all generations."



Islamic Society of North America

"Our children are the most precious trust from God Almighty. It is our collective religious obligation to make sure that they are provided appropriate health care, and possibilities of spiritual and intellectual growth. If we fail in taking care of some of them it is like failing to take care of all of them." Sayyid M. Syeed of the Islamic Society of North America



The Jewish Council for Public Affairs

"The organized Jewish community has long demonstrated a commitment to universal and comprehensive coverage for all children. Our faith informs our position, as our scriptures teach, 'Do not neglect the children of the poor, for from them will go forth the Law.' "(Nedarim 81a)



JEWISH COUNCIL FOR PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Lutheran Services in America

"Lutheran Services in America and our nearly 300 member organizations urge Congress to reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP). LSA members work with children and families to create opportunities and build self-sufficiency and promise in millions of lives. The SCHIP program is essential to the health and well-being of the future of our nation, children."



Lutheran Services in America
Together we can

March of Dimes

"The CHIP package approved by the Senate Finance Committee is a very strong first step toward reauthorization. Several March of Dimes priorities are included: protecting coverage for all currently enrolled children, enabling states to add up to 3.3 million uninsured children to the program, giving states the authority they need to cover uninsured pregnant women and launching a much needed pediatric quality initiative. All of us at the Foundation look forward to working with members of the House and Senate to send the strongest possible bipartisan reauthorization bill to the President for his signature." Dr. Marina L. Weiss, senior vice president, public policy and government affairs



National Association of Children's Hospitals

"Children's access to health care should no longer be held hostage in a political firefight over competing goals for national health care reform. From the very front lines of providing health care to children, children's hospitals believe the Senate Finance Committee's strong, bipartisan SCHIP reauthorization bill is in children's best interest." Lawrence A. McAndrews, president and CEO of the National Association of Children's Hospitals



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CHILDREN'S HOSPITALS

National Association of Public Hospitals

"NAPH strongly supports reauthorization and expansion of the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) to extend health care coverage to one of our nation's most vulnerable populations — children." Larry S. Gage, President



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF PUBLIC HOSPITALS AND HEALTH SYSTEMS



National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.

"Health care for our children is a moral issue for the nation. National leadership must be accountable to enable the health coverage children need to live the lives for which they were created." Rev. Dr. Eileen W. Lindner, Deputy General Secretary



Partnership for Quality Care

"SCHIP has been exceptionally successful, helping millions of children receive the preventive care that keeps them healthy, and we believe it should help millions more uninsured children. As the Cover Kids Now campaign illustrates, the Partnership for Quality Care (PQC) is an unprecedented coalition of providers and workers who have come together to solve the crisis of health care in our nation. The PQC supports guaranteed health care for everyone in America, not only because it is the right thing to do, but because it is the smart thing to do." George C. Halvorson, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Kaiser Permanente



Premier Inc.

"Ensuring adequate funding for the reauthorization of SCHIP to provide essential health care coverage to our nation's children should be a top priority for the federal government."



Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

"As Reform Jews we stand with many other faith traditions who know that our nation's health care system needs healing. We must heal the racial inequalities in our health care system. We must heal the economic inequalities in our health care system. We must heal the spiraling costs of health care, and stand up for the hundreds of thousands of children last year who lost coverage because their families could not afford it. And we must begin today." Mark J. Pelavin, Associate Director, Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism



SEIU

"All eyes in America are on the issue of health care now like never before. Getting both political parties on board to bring coverage to nine million children is exactly the kind of leadership families and caregivers want to see as we go forward." Dennis Rivera, Chair, SEIU Healthcare



Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Inc.

"For the richest country on earth, making sure that the children of the poor have access to quality health care is a moral imperative." Roger T. Playwin, Executive Director, National Council of the United States Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Inc.



United Jewish Communities

"Comprehensive coverage for children is a prerequisite for future success in both education and the workforce. We must all work together, both publicly and through non-governmental organizations, to reach the millions of uninsured children currently left behind. SCHIP has set a new example for health delivery in this nation. UJC hopes Congress will act quickly and decisively to ensure health coverage for the millions of American children and families that depend on it." William Daroff, UJC's Vice President for Public Policy & Director of UJC-Washington



United States Conference of Catholic Bishops

"We firmly believe that there is no excuse for any child in our nation to go without access to health care, which is critically important to the well-being and development of all children. The reauthorization of the SCHIP program is a great opportunity to make a profound difference in the lives of our nation's children. This is an important moral measure of our society and of this Congress." John L. Carr, Secretary, Department of Social Development and World Peace, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops



VHA Inc.

"It is imperative that Congress and the Administration act quickly to reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Program. We have seen the great strides that SCHIP has made in providing care for uninsured children, and we need to ensure the program is continued." Edward Goodman, vice president of public policy, VHA Inc.

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STATE CHILDREN'S HEALTH INSURANCE PROGRAM (SCHIP): National Public Opinion Survey Key Findings

The results of this survey, which was conducted July 19-22, show that the public broadly supports a strong and sustained SCHIP program and widely opposes a presidential veto of SCHIP legislation.

Highlights (from the survey of 800 registered voters nationwide):

- 86 percent said that Congress should vote to continue the SCHIP program (57 percent strongly favor, 29 percent somewhat favor).
- 71 percent favor the Senate proposal to increase spending on SCHIP by \$35 billion over five years (41 percent strongly favor, 30 percent somewhat favor).
- 63 percent think that President Bush would be doing the wrong thing if he vetoed SCHIP legislation.
- 65 percent think the federal government should take financial responsibility to cover uninsured children.
- 61 percent said the current health care system is not meeting the needs of most American children.
- 81 percent said that nine million uninsured children represents a crisis or a very serious problem (33 percent crisis, 48 percent very serious problem).
- 'Providing affordable quality health care' was ranked by more voters than any other domestic priority, including homeland security, as the issue that should receive the most attention from government at this time.

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